

Lord Melville

45092-3

26 July 1804

Lord Melville presents his humble duty
to Your Royal Highness & has the honor
to submit for Your Royal Highness's consider-
-ation a list of Line of Battle Ships in
Commission in the Channel & North Sea,
which after making the Deductions specified
on the margin, may be assembled at Spithead
probably in three weeks, hence if orders
to that effect are given now. In addition
to that number, two or three Ships may
be expected within the same period with
homeward bound convoys, & within six
weeks perhaps five or six sail from
the Mediterranean. Under those

circumstances, in addition to the important considerations which Lord Melville has had the honor on behalf of Lord Bathurst of representing to Your Royal Highness, in regard to the expediency of withdrawing the British troops from France with the least possible delay after their number shall have begun to be materially diminished. Lord Melville begs leave humbly to submit to Your Royal Highness that it may be advisable to defer to the latest period of His Imperial Majesty's & The King of Prussia's stay in this Country the intended visit to Portsmouth, & that the five sail of the

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Line now in the Downs & the Scheld
may in the mean time be employed in
bringing Troops from Bourdeaux.

There is another circumstance
connected with this subject, which in the
Discharge of his Duty to Your Royal Highness,
Lord Melville does not feel himself at
liberty to withhold from Your Royal Highness's
notice & consideration, more especially
as it has been earnestly, though privately,
represented by several experienced &
intelligent Officers. On the conclusion
of the Wars in 1783 & 1802, serious
Disturbances broke out in the Fleet, &

Though there is every reason to believe that no unpleasant feeling exists at the present moment in the minds of the Seamen, the Board of Admiralty have been careful, as a measure of precaution, (without its appearing to be the effect of design,) to avoid as much as possible a considerable assemblage of Ships at any one Port, & to pay them off gradually & separately.

The present state of affairs at the close of a long war with France, & the Discharge of only a portion of the Seamen, when a great number are still retained on account of the American War, is the most likely that can well be imagined to excite
uneasy

uneasy feelings, & to produce unpleasant consequences if any such feelings exist or shall be instilled into their minds.

The mere circumstance of bringing away one half of Lord Keith's Fleet from the Gironde, for the purpose of their being paid off, before the other half intended for the Coast of America had proceeded on their voyage, might provoke an explosion which perhaps would otherwise have been avoided.

If the Ships as above mentioned shall on their return to England be ordered to Spithead & remain there only a few days, & if at that time Your Royal

Highness's visit to Portsmouth could take
place, it is not probable that under
such circumstances, & especially on such
an occasion, any thing irregular or improper
would happen in the Fleet, & a more
respectable Squadron in point of numbers
would be collected than would be practicable
at an earlier period, even if the important
measure of withdrawing as expeditiously
as possible the troops from Bourdeaux
were to be suspended.

Admiralty
26th May 1814.

Channel Fleet - Lucie Charlotte 100.
Ville de Paris 110.

- x Ajax --- 74 --- Going with Troops to America }
 - x Centaur --- --- with convoy to Do
 - Clarence ---
 - Dublin ---
 - Esmont ---
- x Magnificent --- --- Going with convoy to West Indies }
 - Hippon ---
- x Royal Duke --- --- With Troops to America.
- x Sultan --- --- Do
- x Bengour --- --- Do
- x Haropile --- --- Do
- x York --- --- Do
- Zealous ---

North Sea

- Impregnable - 98
- Bedford - 74
- Chatham ---
- Montagu ---
- Norge ---

- In Port
- x Bombay --- --- Has no Men at present
 - x Cumberland --- --- With East India Convoy
 - x Repulse --- --- Has no men at present
 - St Domingo ---
 - x Tigre --- --- Has no Men at present
 - x Valiant --- --- Do

Lord Melbourne

26th May 1814.

Reductions in the
Army